

AKIRA

13

TM



EPIC COMICS \$3.50 • \$4.75 CAN • VOL. 1, NO. 13



KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Published monthly by EPIC COMICS®
in collaboration with
Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo
Office of Publication:
387 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

AKIRA™ Vol. 1, No. 13

Copyright © 1989 MASH-ROOM Co., Ltd.
All rights reserved.

First published in Japan in 1984
by Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.

No part of this book may be printed
or reproduced in any manner
whatsoever, whether mechanical or
electronic, without the
written permission of the author
and publisher. The stories,
characters and incidents in this
publication are entirely
fictional. All characters appearing
in this book and their
distinctive likenesses are trademarks
of Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.
Distributed in Japan
by Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo

English language translation is
Copyright © 1989 MASH-ROOM Co., Ltd.
and Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.
All rights reserved.

EPIC COMICS is a registered trademark
of Epic Comics.



WITH
DESPERATION

AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

CHAPTER 13

DESPERATION

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo**, plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where the first of the bombs fell thirty-eight years before. There, a band of teenaged delinquents led by **Kaneda** encounter **Number 26**—a terrified child who possesses extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends, then vanishes.

As a result, **Kaneda** and **Tetsuo** become entangled in a power struggle between a mysterious military and scientific organization led by a man known only as the **Colonel** and an underground resistance group, bent on putting a stop to the Colonel's activities.

Among the resistance, **Kaneda** meets **Kay**—a girl he alternately maddens and tries to

seduce—and Kay's "brother", **Ryu**. The leaders of the resistance include **Nezu**—who publically leads the political party that opposes the government—and a powerful religious leader with strong precognitive gifts, **Lady Miyako**.

The **Colonel** has a number of children under his control, each one possessing a distinct set of psychic talents and identified by a number marked on their hand. (**Lady Miyako** was, at one time, Number 19 in this series.) One of the children, the mental giant **Akira**, is so powerful that since the war he has been buried beneath the earth's surface, suspended in cryogenic sleep.

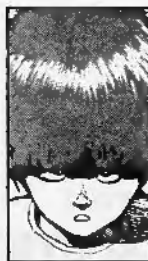
The Colonel's chief medical advisor subjects **Tetsuo** to painful electronic and chemical experiments, awakening tremendous telepathic potential in the boy, who is redubbed **Number 41**. Unfortunately, as his powers appear, a monstrous side of Tetsuo's nature also surfaces. Able to shrug off the most serious injuries, **Tetsuo** goes on a killing spree. He eventually murders one of Kaneda's closest friends and attacks **Kaneda**, who, along with **Kay**, is taken to the Colonel's installation.



Kaneda



Kay



Sakaki



Akira



Unable to tolerate the notion that **Akira** may be more powerful than he is, **Tetsuo** leaves the Colonel's installation, determined to find his rival. The psychic children, like **Lady Miyako**, fear Akira's power and are worried about the disaster Tetsuo may unleash. They use their talents to help **Kaneda** and **Kay** escape, and the pair follow **Tetsuo** to the Olympic site, below which **Akira** rests. There, they are almost reunited with **Ryu**, who is working undercover as a soldier.

Hoping to prevent a disaster, the **Colonel** follows with his troops and scientists. When everyone arrives at the site, fighting breaks out.

Tetsuo easily repels attacks by wave after wave of soldiers armed with the most sophisticated weaponry. The

scientists monitoring Akira's cryosleep discover that the temperature in Akira's chamber is beginning to rise. They deduce that even in hibernation, Akira's power is responding to Tetsuo's psychic energy.

Seeking a way out, **Kay** and **Kaneda** instead find their way to Akira's chamber. They watch from hiding as **Tetsuo** heads towards the chamber's entrance.

The **Colonel** orders his troops to fall back, and take cover. Intense cold from the growing cracks in Akira's chamber spills throughout the site, indicating that Akira is close to consciousness. Just as **Tetsuo** reaches Akira's resting place, the cryogenic chamber begins to crack from within, and **Akira** emerges.

The paranormal giant is still dazed and weak with the



Ryu



Kiyoko



The Colonel



Tetsuo

aftereffects of his coma. He is unable to speak, shy of bright lights, and easily ordered about. **Tetsuo** and he begin to make their way to the surface. **Kay** and **Kaneda**, realizing that they must move or perish, also manage to reach the surface.

Ryu is saved by soldiers who still believe he is one of them.

Terror sweeps the control room, as the **Colonel** tries desperately to prevent panicking. A scientist triggers a Code 7 Emergency Alarm. The civilian defense system kicks in and mayhem takes over on the streets. Neo-Tokyo holds its collective breath waiting for the bombs to fall again.

Terrified of what has been unleashed and determined to act before a greater catastrophe occurs, the **Colonel** summons the powerful **SOL** military satellite and orders that its laser cannon be fired at **Tetsuo** and **Akira**. The two boys are separated by the blasts. **Akira** is saved by **Kay** and **Kaneda**. **Tetsuo** is less fortunate, the laser strikes his left arm.

Neo-Tokyo is placed in a state of military emergency following the disaster. Backing up the troops are "caretaker" robots who patrol the streets, dealing harshly with looters and

restoring order. The **Colonel**—managing to conceal the truth about what has occurred, despite leaks to the media—plans to use the emergency as an excuse to hunt down and destroy the resistance once and for all.

Lady Miyako, warns **Nezu** to hold his people in reserve. She then calls upon **Sakaki**, a young girl trained in techniques of infiltration, observation, and combat, and asks her to find **Akira**.

Kay and **Kaneda** take shelter with **Chiyoko**, a formidable woman in the resistance. Without Kaneda's knowledge, **Kay** meets with **Nezu** and agrees to turn the still-somnolent **Akira** over to him. When **Ryu**, still recovering from the frostbite he suffered at the Olympic site, also reports to **Nezu**, who chooses not to bring him up to date on the status of **Akira**. He also denies any knowledge of Kay's whereabouts.

Sakaki follows **Kay** back to Chiyoko's hideout, where she rouses **Akira** and leads him away. **Kaneda** is unable to stop **Sakaki**, but manages to alert **Kay** and **Chiyoko**.

Sakaki and **Akira** safely reach the street...and are cornered by caretaker robots.



Takashi



Lady Miyako



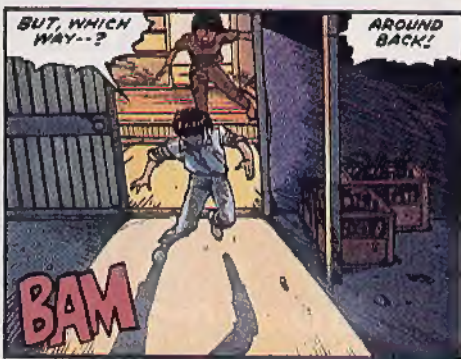
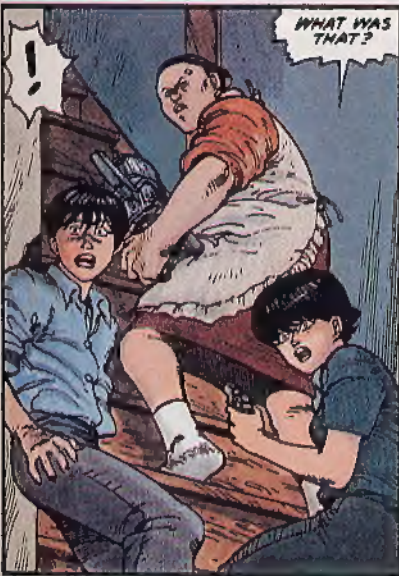
Nezu

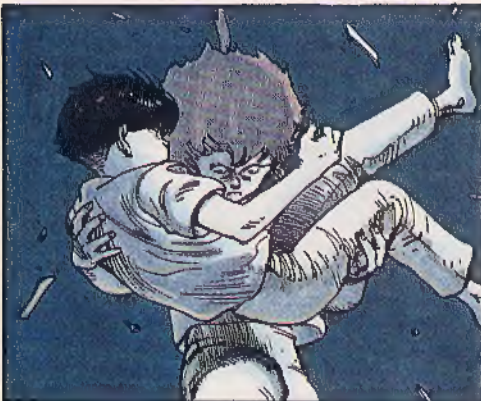


Chiyoko

ZZAT

KRAKLE





tap



PK 21
ZSST



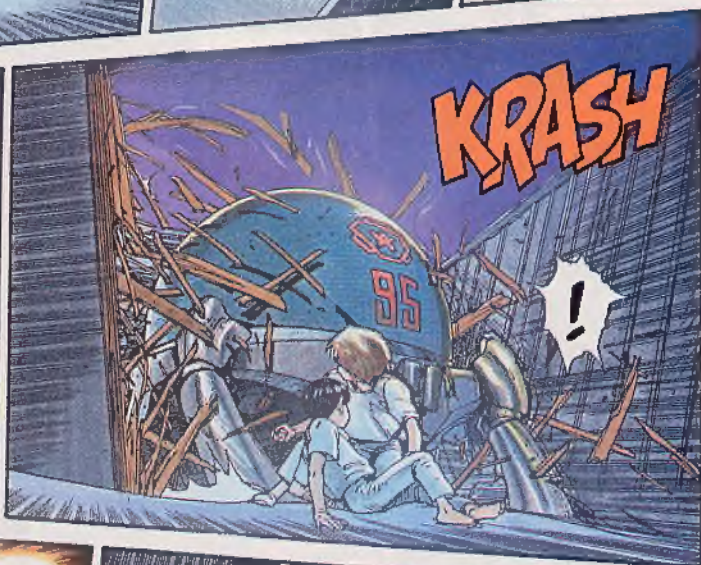
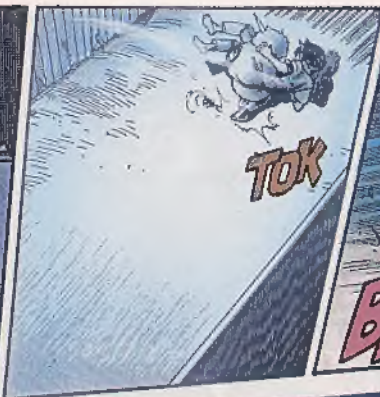
ZZAP ZAT

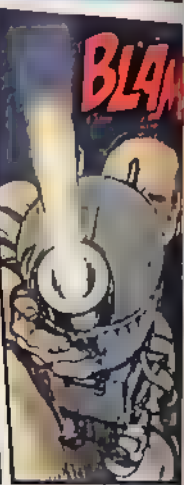
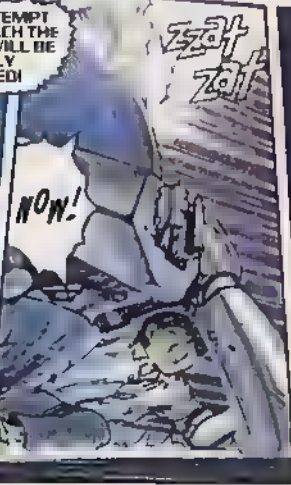
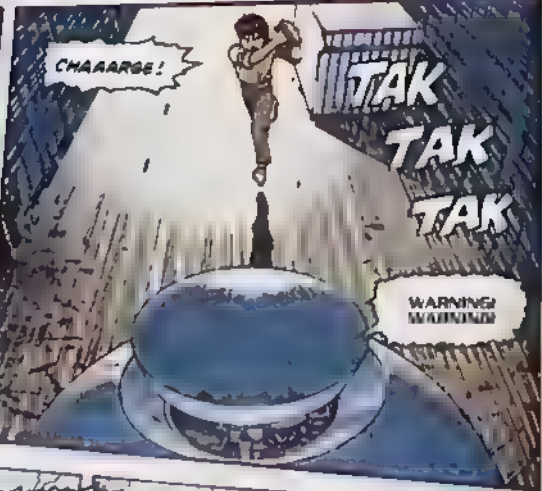
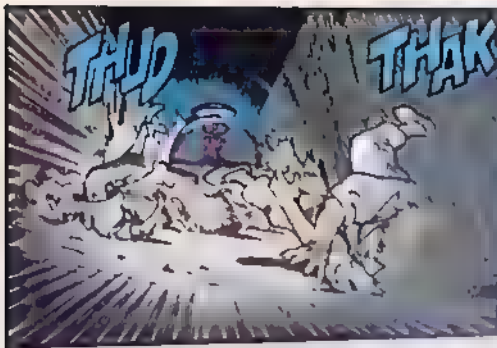


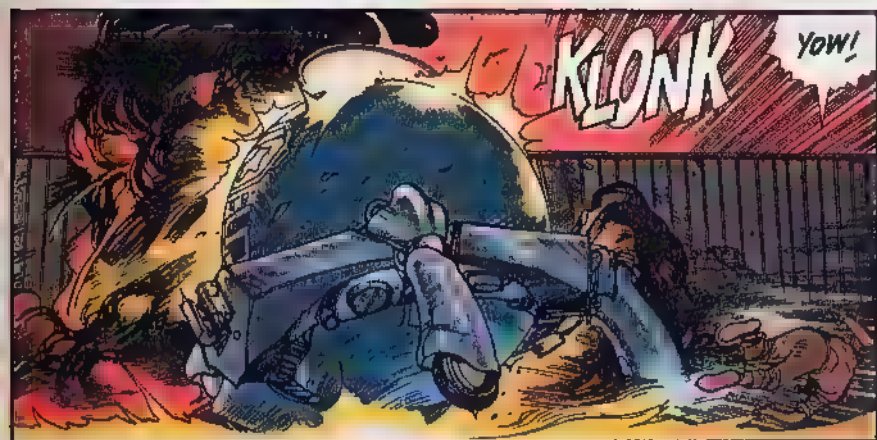
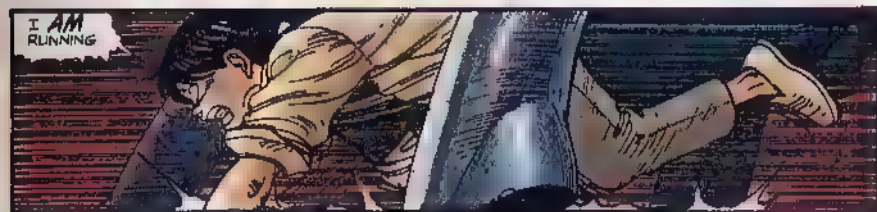
tok

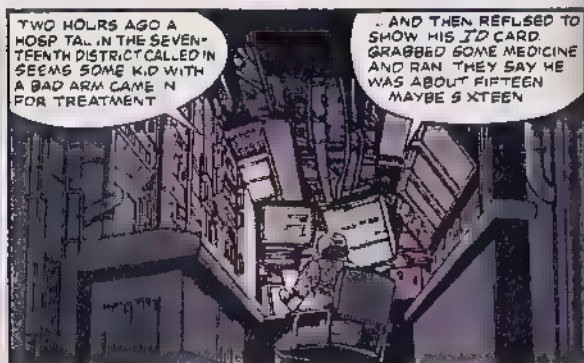
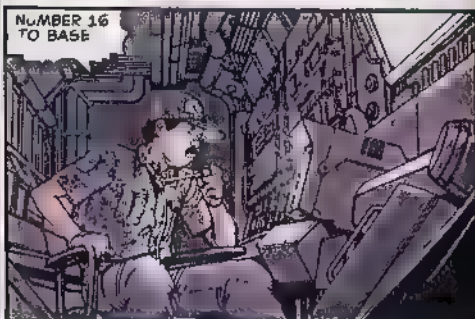


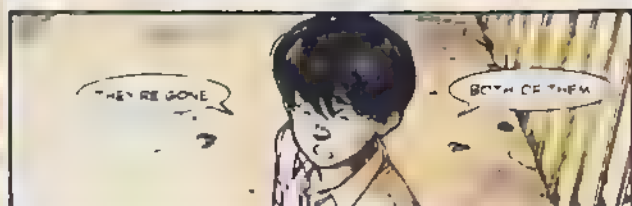
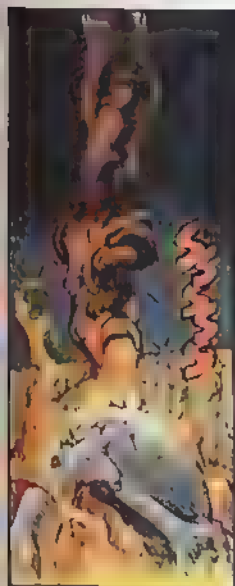
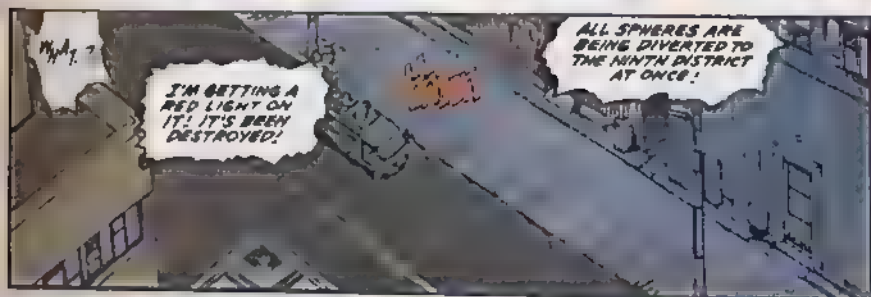
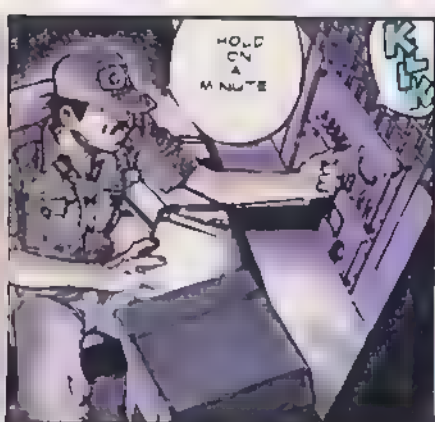
ZZAP ZAT

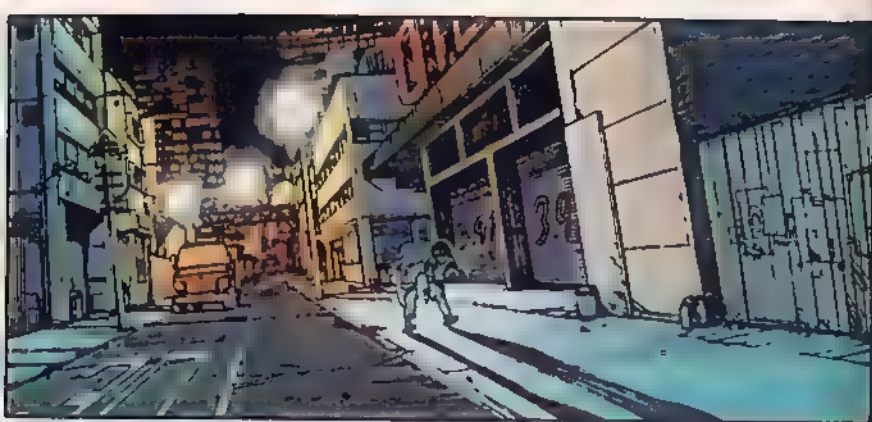


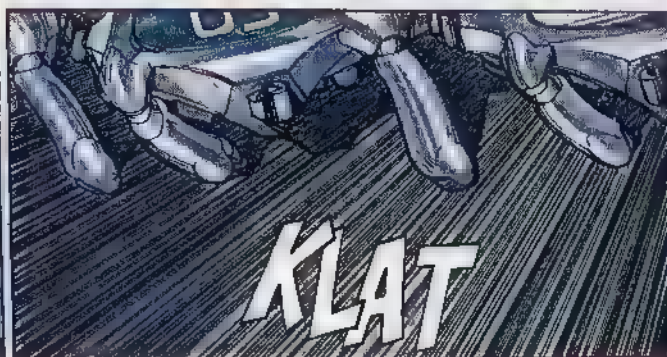


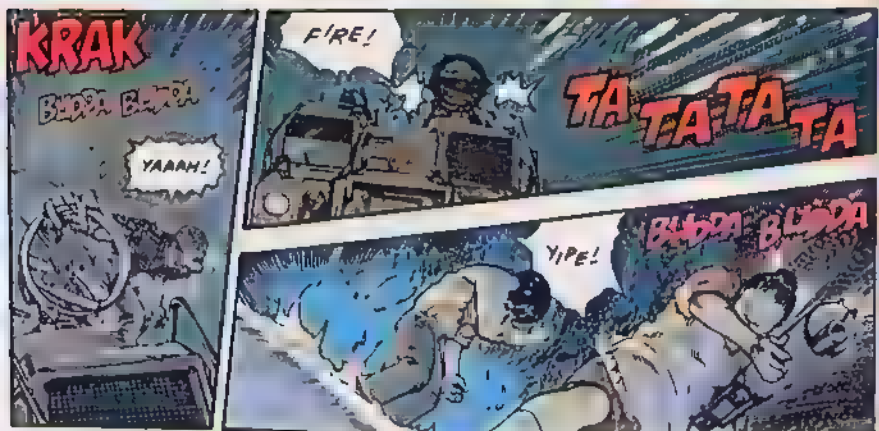
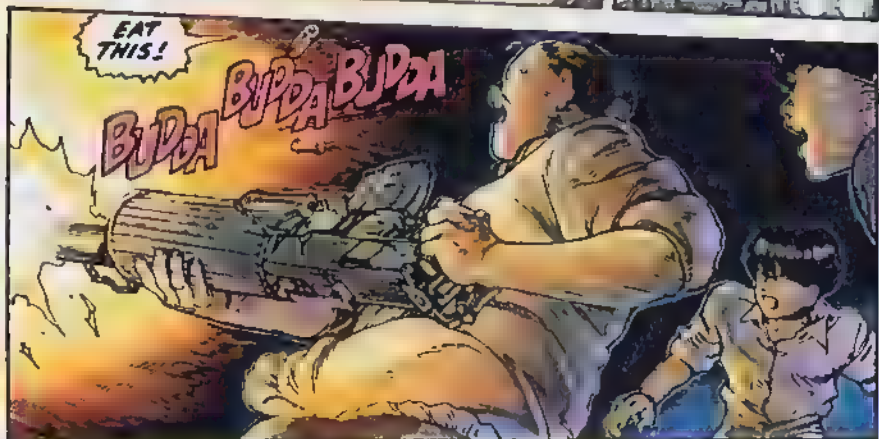
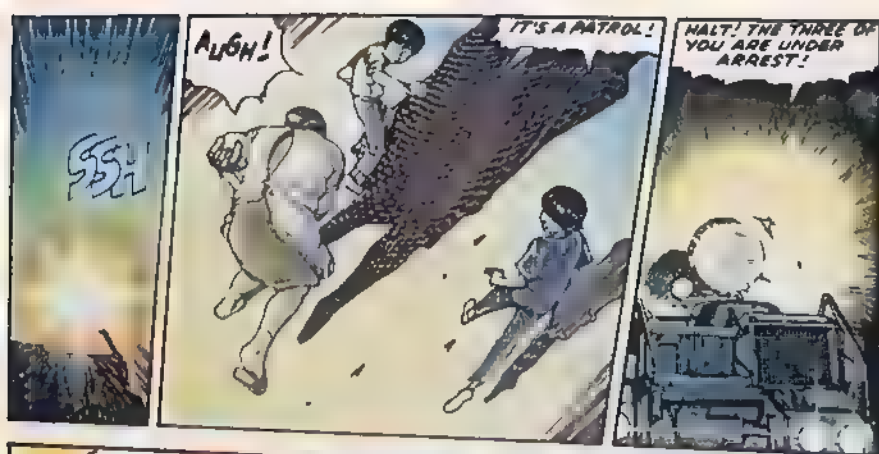


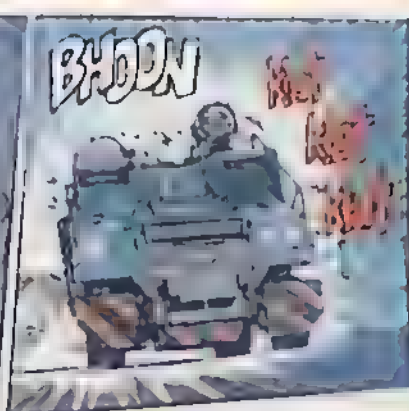


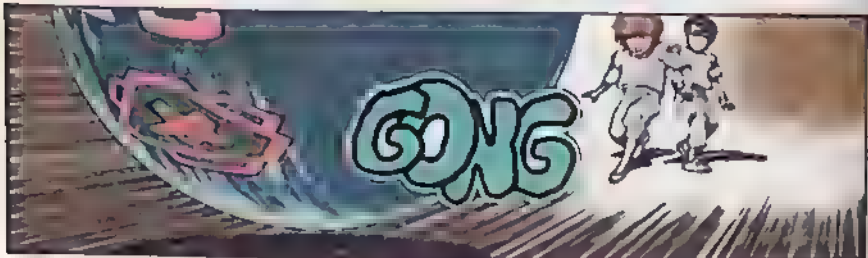
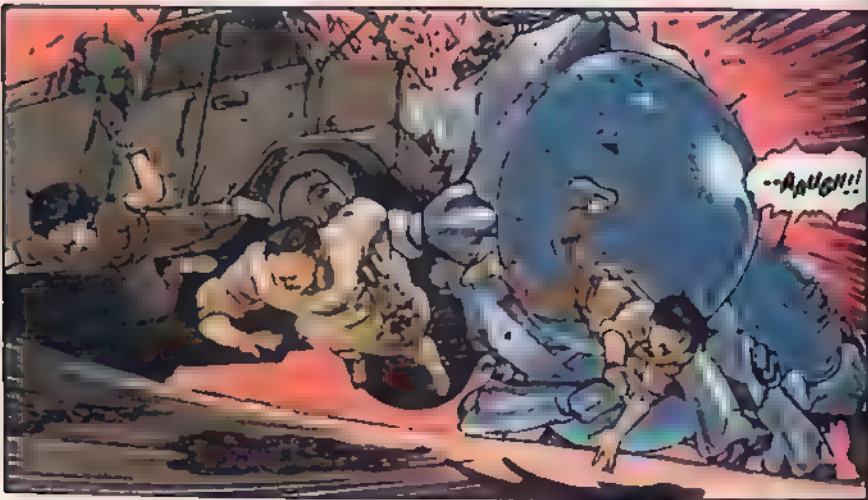




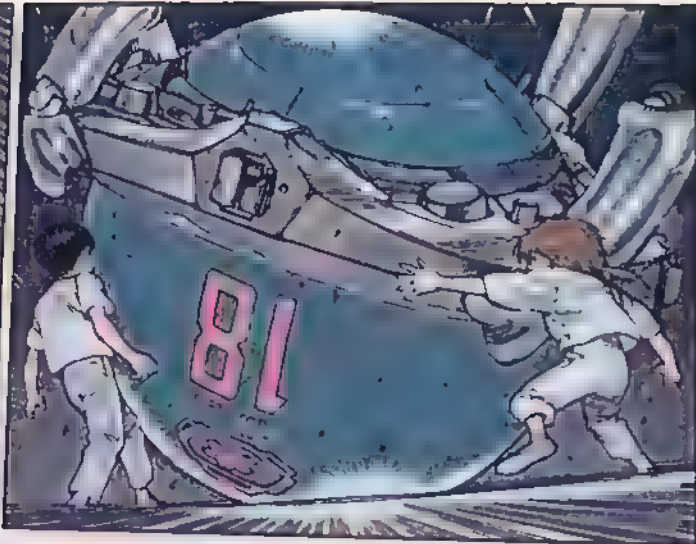








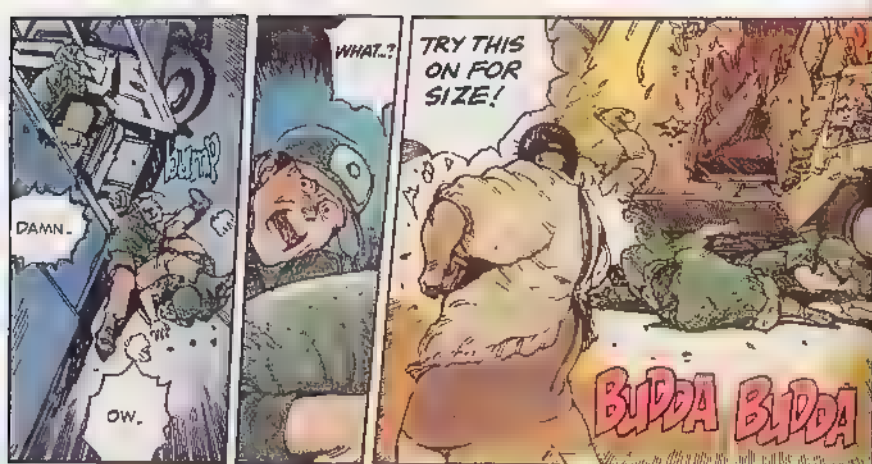
LOOK
OUT!!

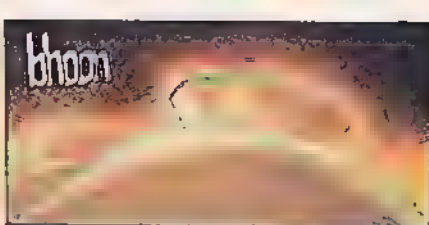
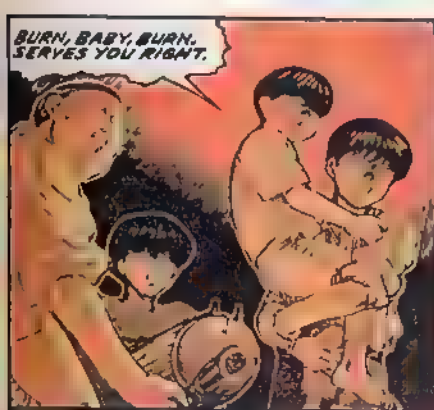


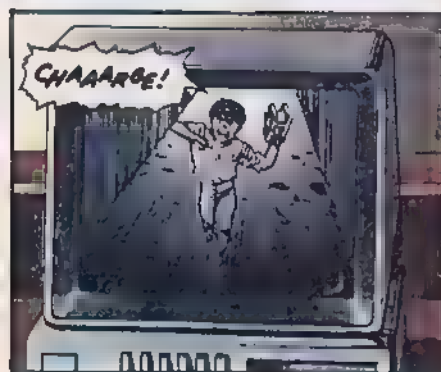
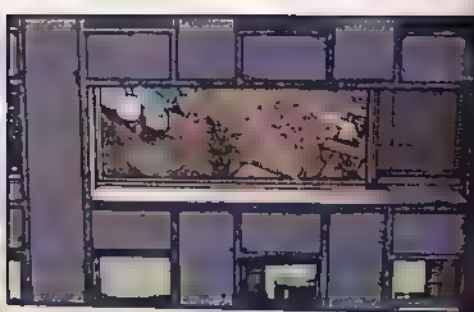
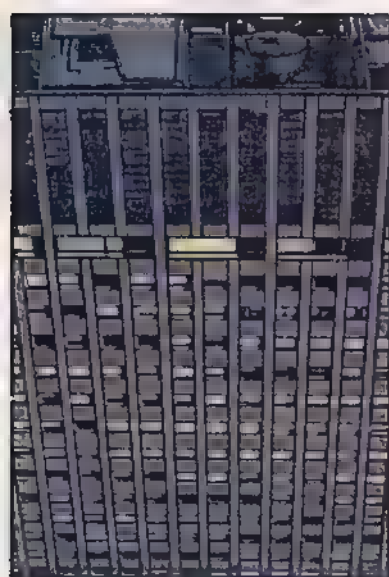
HEY!!

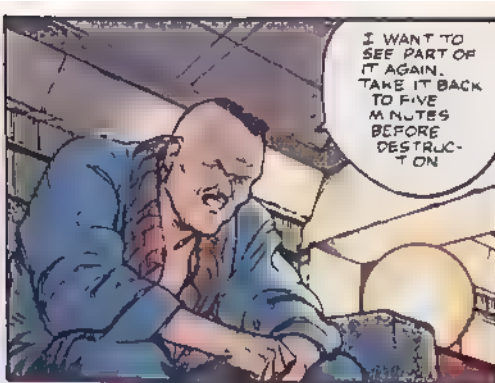
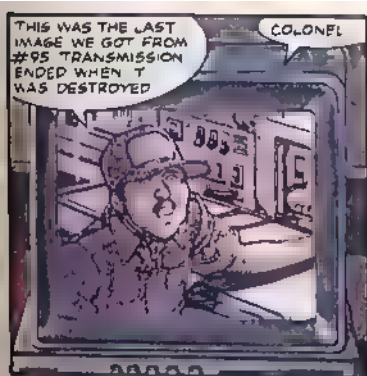


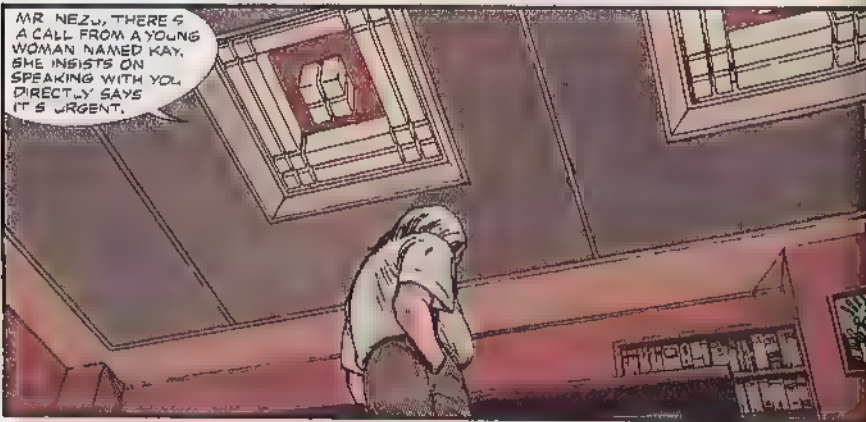
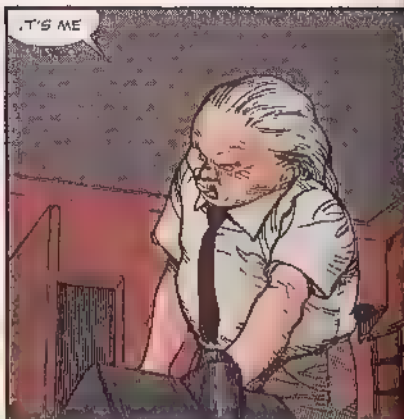
uhh uhh

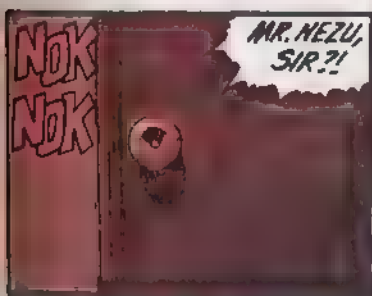
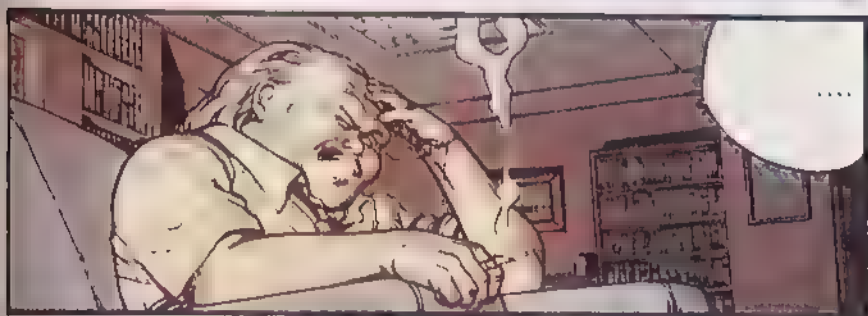




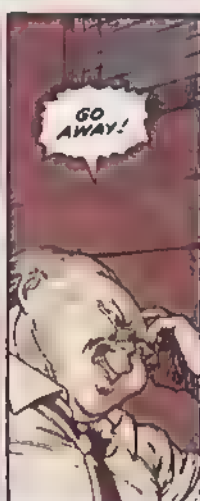








MR. NEZU,
SIR?!




GO
AWAY!

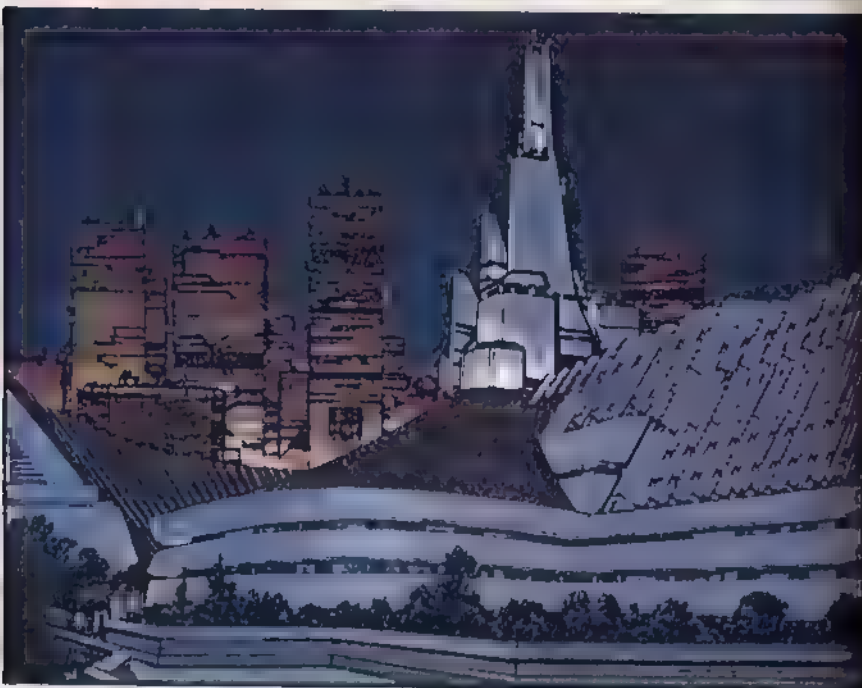


BUT
S R

LADY MIYAKO
WANTS TO SEE
YOU S R SHE'S
SENT AN
ESCORT

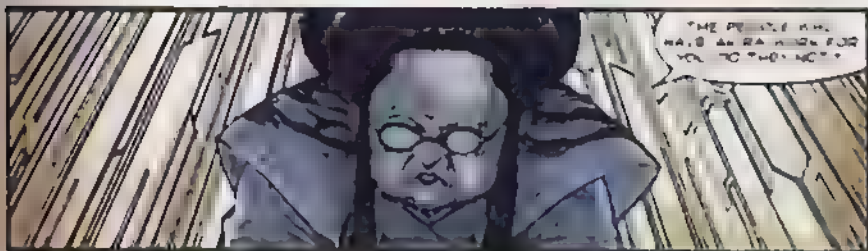


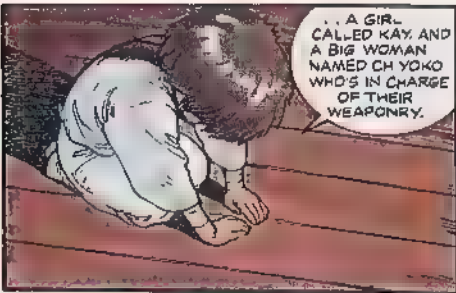
LADY MIYAKO
EXPECTS YOU
NOW!



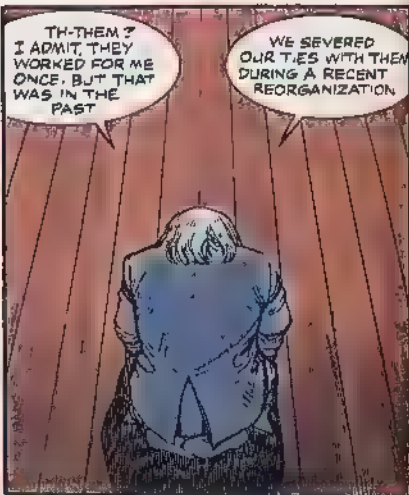
I'VE
BROUGHT
MR
NEZU

LADY MIYAKO'S
WAITING IN THE HALL
OF WORSHIP





... A GIRL CALLED KAY, AND A BIG WOMAN NAMED CH YOKO WHO'S IN CHARGE OF THEIR WEAPONRY.

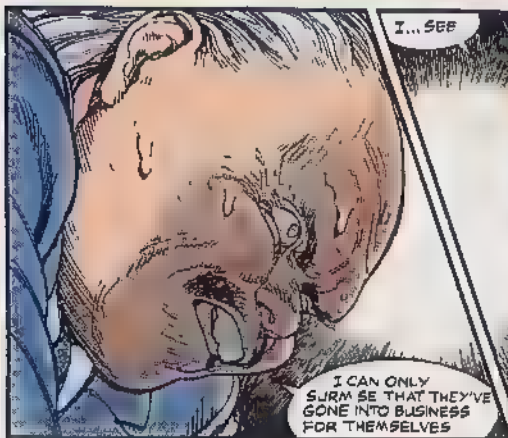


TH- THEM? I ADMIT, THEY WORKED FOR ME ONCE, BUT THAT WAS IN THE PAST

WE SEVERED OUR TIES WITH THEM DURING A RECENT REORGANIZATION

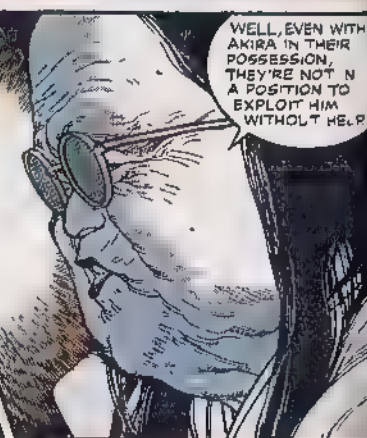


THERE WAS ANOTHER ONE, A BOY I D DON'T RECOGNIZE

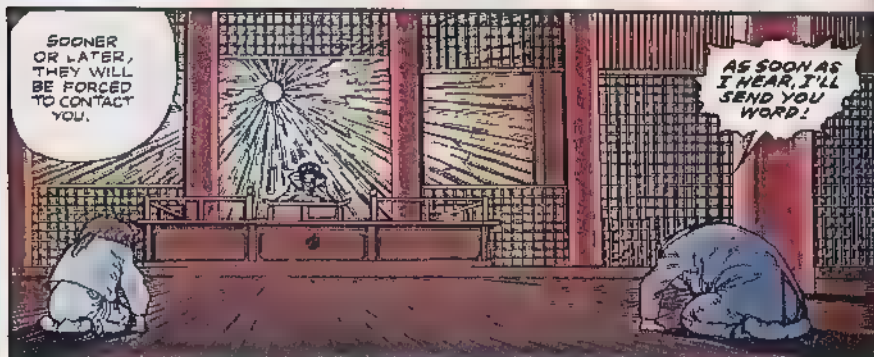


I... SEE

I CAN ONLY SURMISE THAT THEY'VE GONE INTO BUSINESS FOR THEMSELVES



WELL, EVEN WITH AKIRA IN THEIR POSSESSION, THEY'RE NOT IN A POSITION TO EXPLOIT HIM WITHOUT HELP



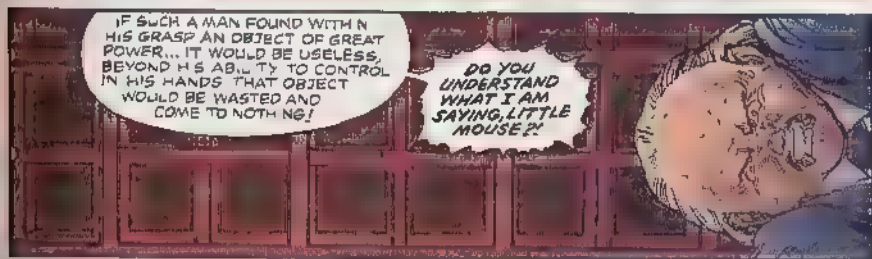
SOONER OR LATER, THEY WILL BE FORCED TO CONTACT YOU.

AS SOON AS I HEAR, I'LL SEND YOU WORD!



ALL MEN ..

.. ARE BORN WITH
CERTAIN CAPABILITIES,
AND CERTAIN LIMITATIONS.
AND EVEN A MAN OF GREAT
LIMITATIONS MAY IMAGINE
HIMSELF A MAN OF GREAT
CAPABILITY

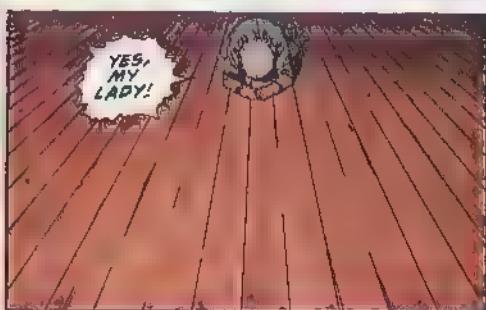


IF SUCH A MAN FOUND WITHIN
HIS GRASP AN OBJECT OF GREAT
POWER... IT WOULD BE USELESS,
BEYOND HIS ABILITY TO CONTROL
IN HIS HANDS THAT OBJECT
WOULD BE WASTED AND
COME TO NOTHING!

DO YOU
UNDERSTAND
WHAT I AM
SAYING, LITTLE
MOUSE?!



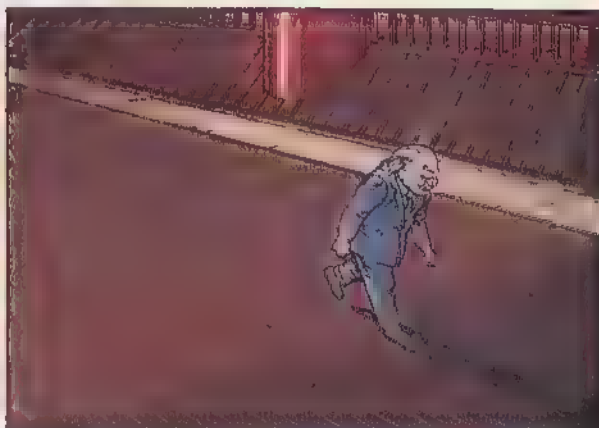
YOU
MAY GO
NOW

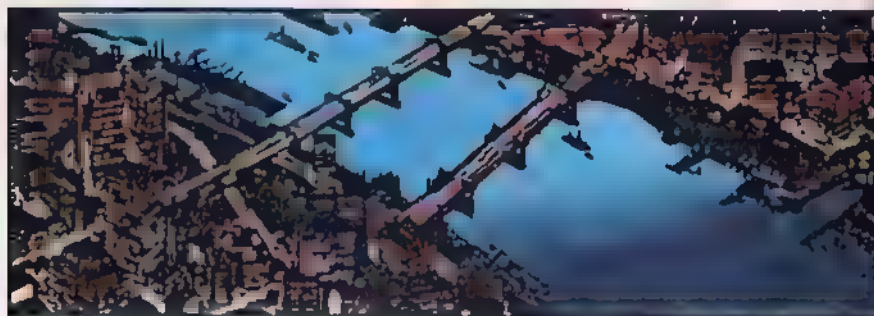
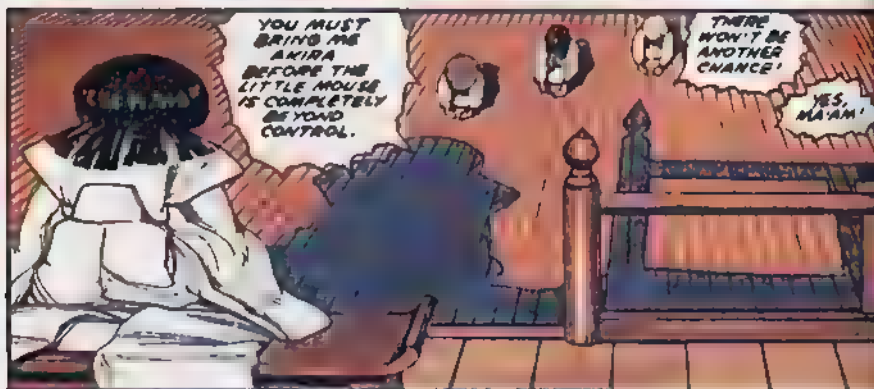


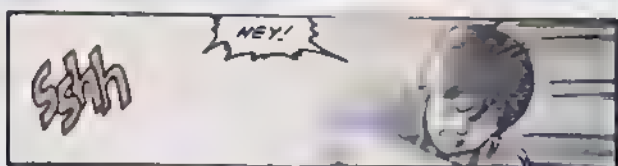
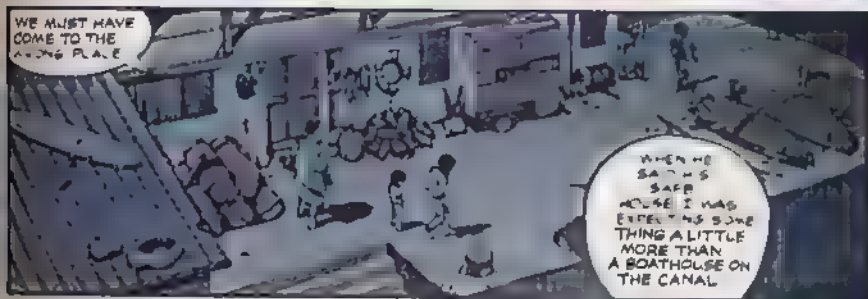
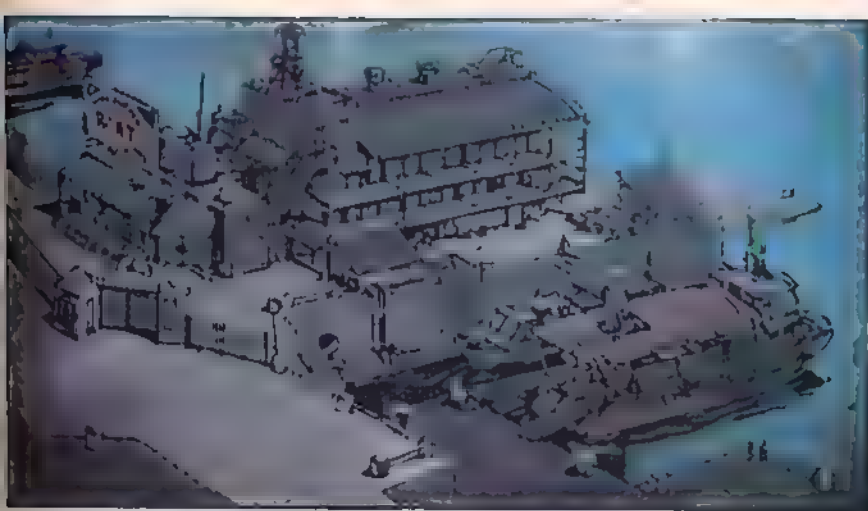
YES,
MY
LADY!



THANK
YOU FOR SHARING
YOUR WISDOM. I
WON'T FORGET IT

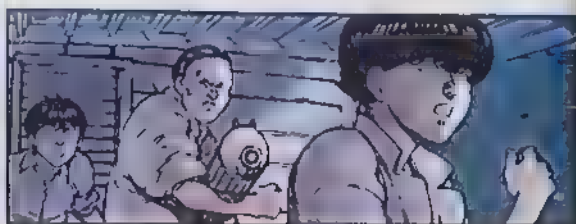






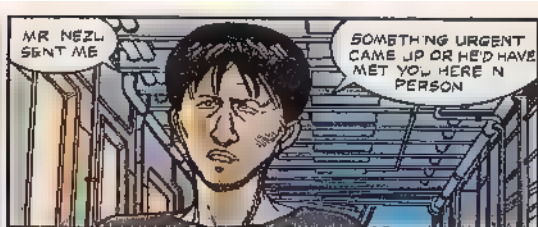
MY NAME IS KAY! WE'VE
BROUGHT YOU AKIRA!

ssh



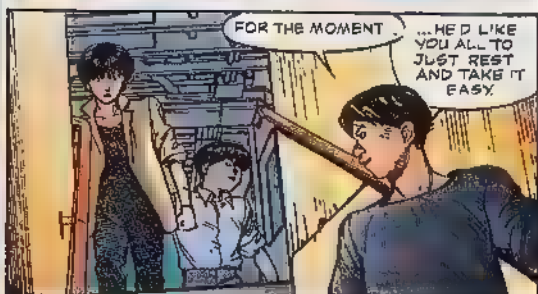


BE CAREFUL ON THE GANG-PLANK



MR NEZL SENT ME

SOMETHING URGENT CAME UP OR HE'D HAVE MET YOU HERE N PERSON



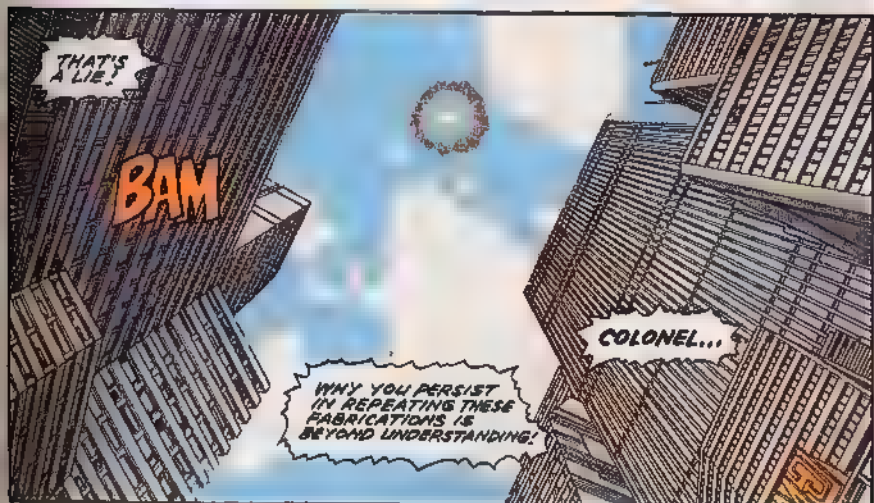
FOR THE MOMENT

...HE'D LIKE YOU ALL TO JUST REST AND TAKE IT EASY.



WALK THIS WAY

MR. NEZL WILL BE HERE FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.



THAT'S A LIE!

BAM

COLONEL...

WHY YOU PERSIST IN REPEATING THESE FABRICATIONS IS BEYOND UNDERSTANDING!

AKIRA HAS BEEN
KIDNAPPED! YOU'VE
ALL SEEN THE
VIDEO!

KIDNAPPED BY CHILDREN!
WHAT YOU FAILED TO DO IS
PRESENT ANY EVIDENCE
THAT THE PEOPLE WE SAW
POSE A THREAT TO NATIONAL
SECURITY.

I KNOW WHAT I'M
TALKING ABOUT! I
KNOW AKIRA, AND I
KNOW THE PEOPLE
WHO HAVE HIM!

IF WE DON'T ACT
QUICKLY, IT WILL BE
TOO LATE! GIVE ME
BACK MY COMMAND!

OUT OF THE
QUESTION

OUR DECISION
IS FINAL.

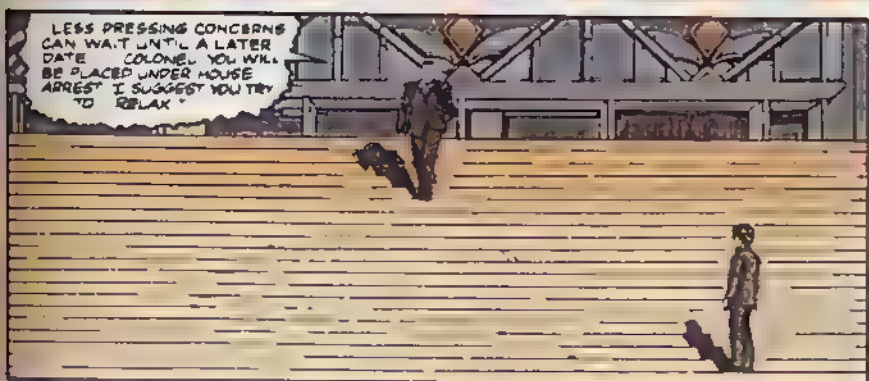
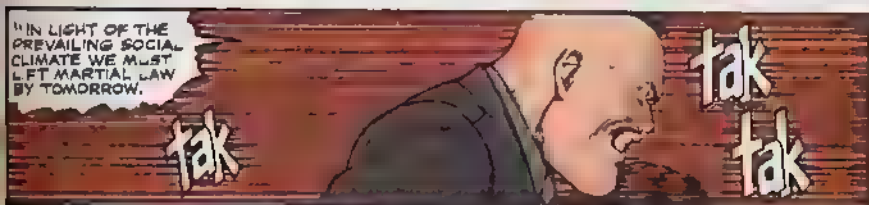
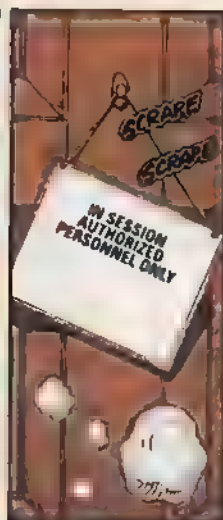
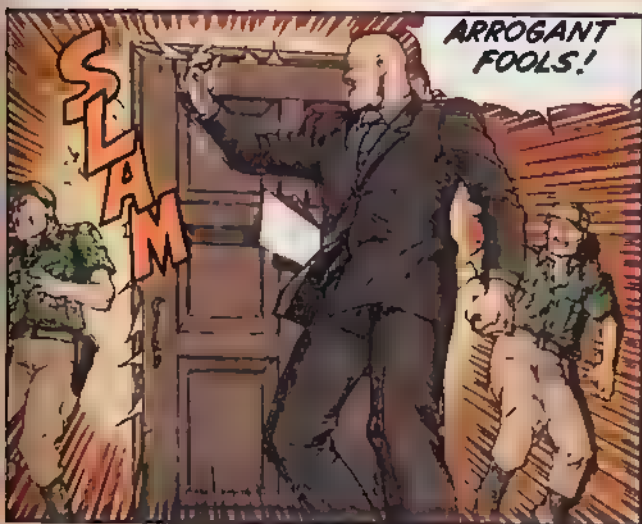
AKIRA IS OFFICIALLY
DEAD, KILLED BY
SOL.

ALL THAT REMAINS FOR US TO
ATTACH THE BLAME, WE'VE
ATTACHED IT TO YOU, COLONEL, AND
THAT ELIMINATES ANY CHANCE OF
YOUR REGAINING COMMAND.

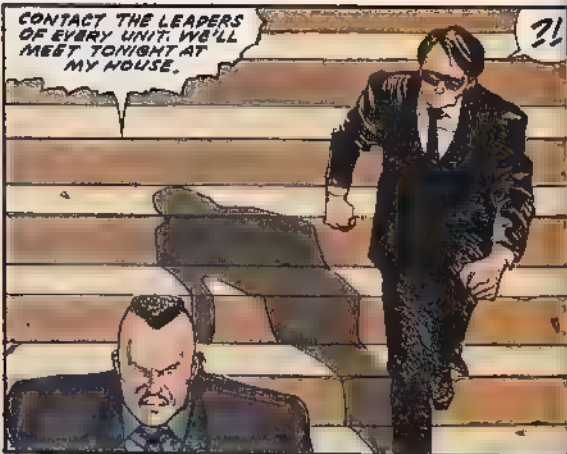
AKIRA IS SOMEWHERE
IN NEO-TOKYO! DON'T
YOU REALIZE WHAT
THAT MEANS?!
WE'RE ON THE BRINK
OF CATASTROPHE!

YOU MUST REINSTATE
THE CODE SEVEN
EMERGENCY ALERT!
FIND AKIRA WHILE
THERE'S STILL TIME!

SCRAPE



CONTACT THE LEADERS
OF EVERY UNIT. WE'LL
MEET TONIGHT AT
MY HOUSE.



I'LL NEED AT LEAST 70%
OF THEM IN ATTENDANCE.
IF ANYONE CLAIMS HE CAN'T
COME, HAVE HIM SWEAR AN
OATH OF LOYALTY AND HAVE
SOMEONE YOU'RE SURE OF
TAIL HIM AT ALL TIMES. THIS
MUST REMAIN ABSOLUTELY
TOP SECRET
...UNDERSTOOD?



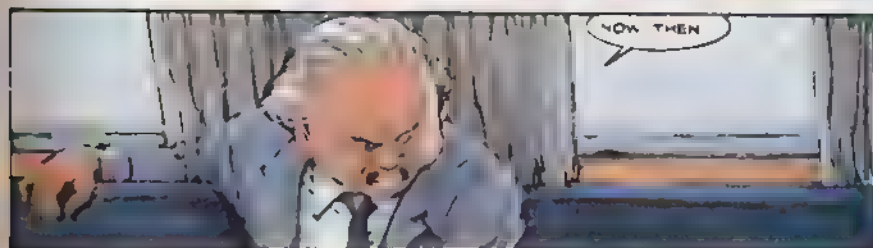
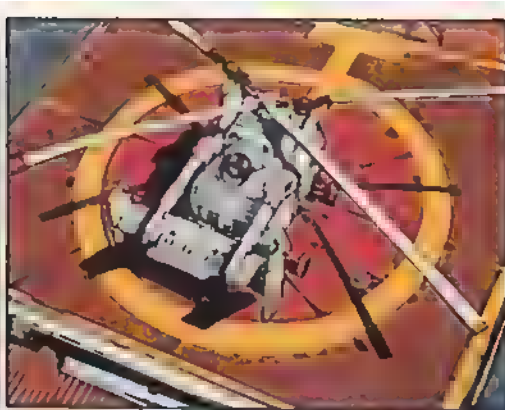
YES, COLONEL!

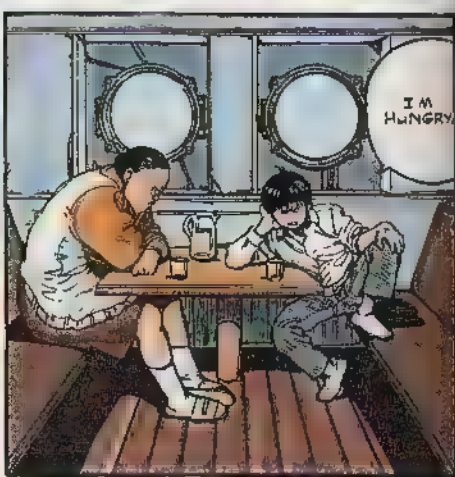
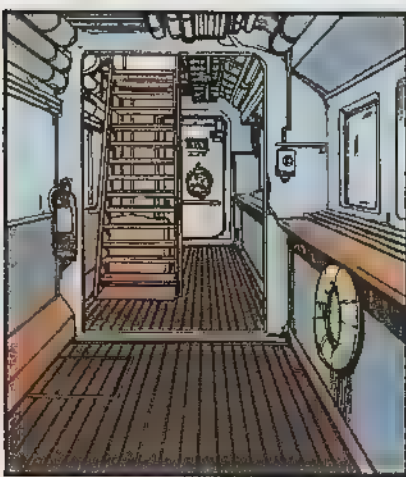
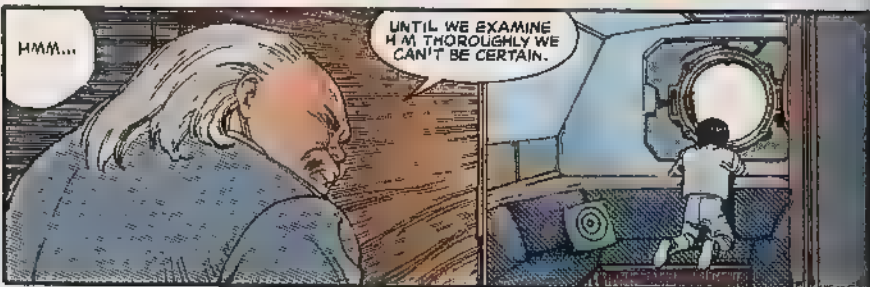
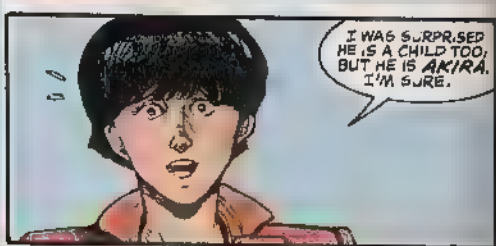
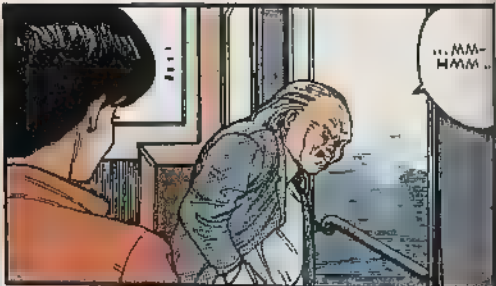
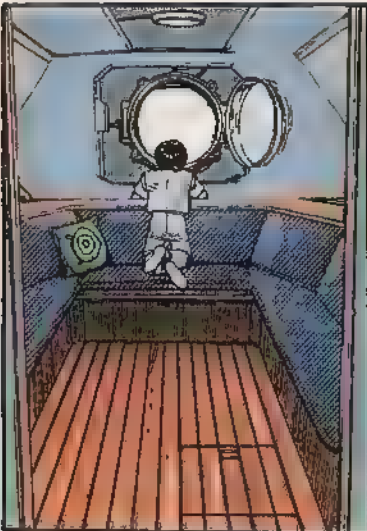
I... OVERHEARD WHAT
HAPPENED, SIR, AND
THEY CALL THEM-
SELVES LEADERS!
WHAT A FIASCO!

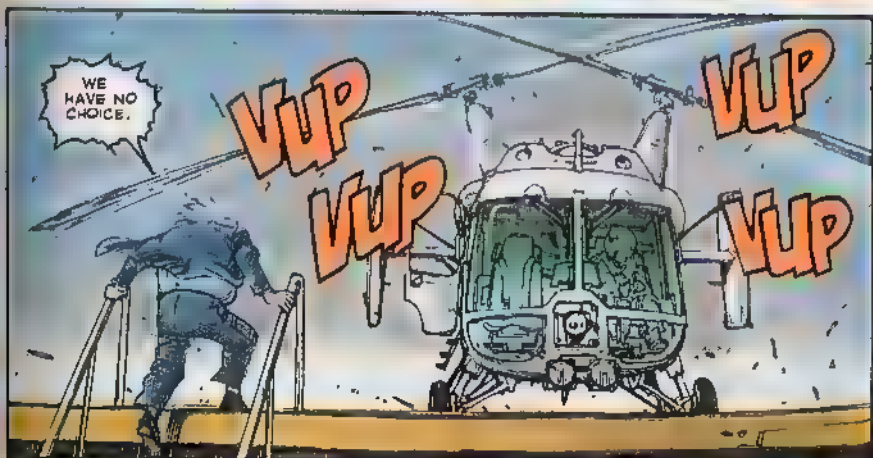
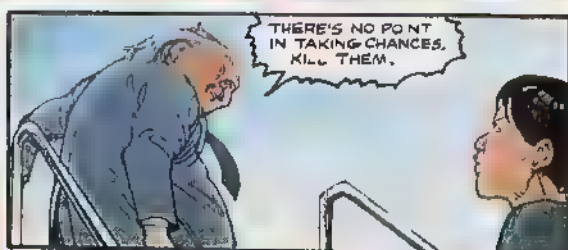
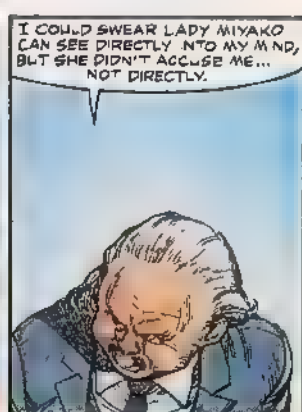
I HAVE BETTER THINGS
TO DO THAN LISTEN TO
YOU CHATTER. GO!

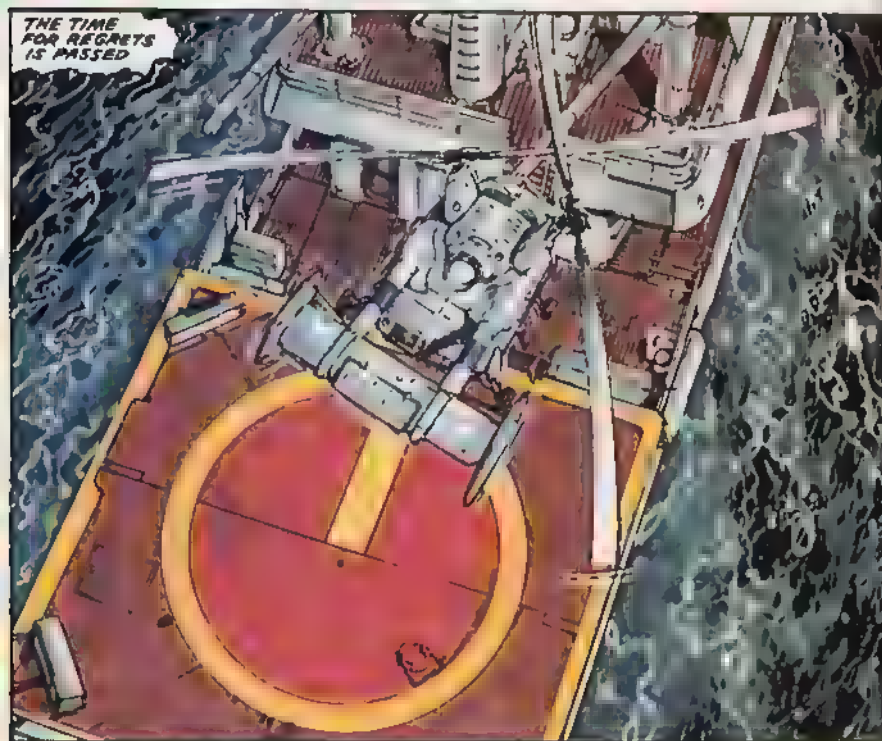
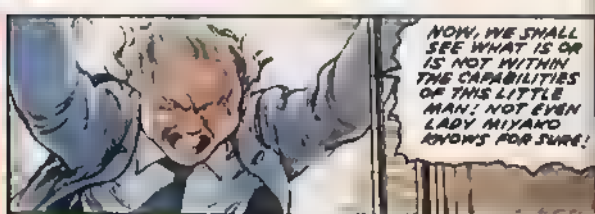
YESSIR!

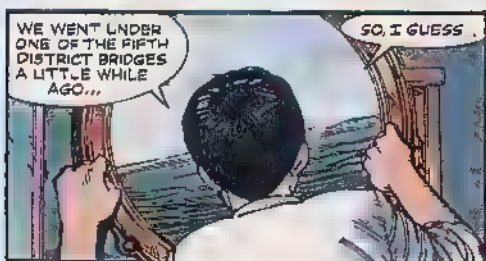
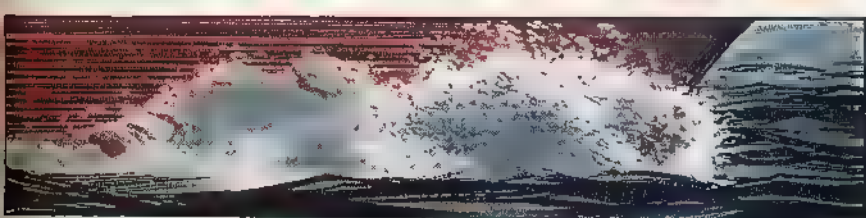


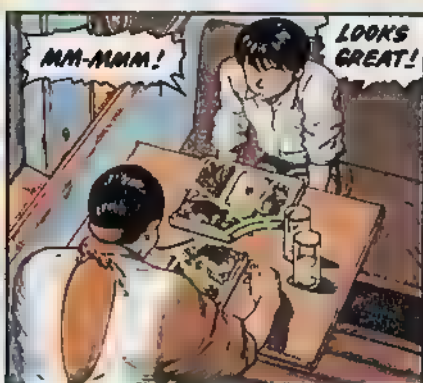
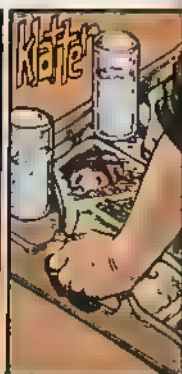
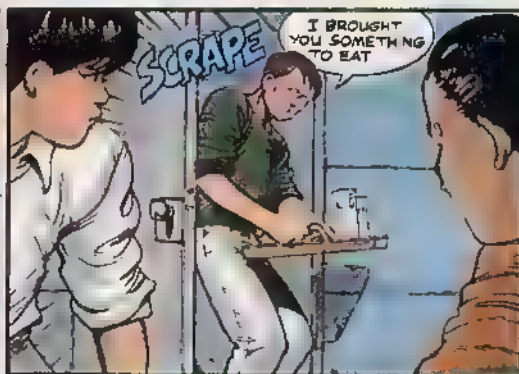
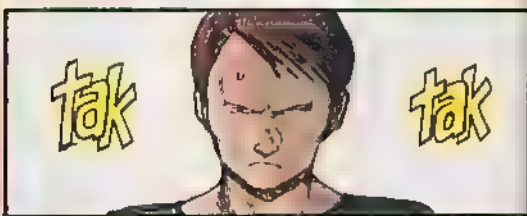
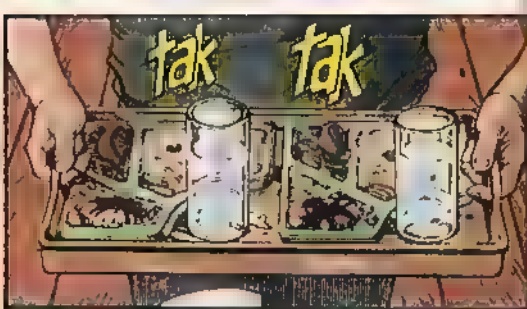






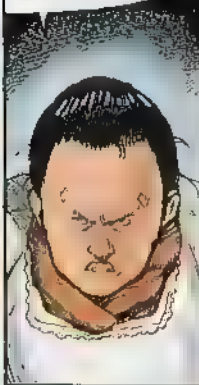




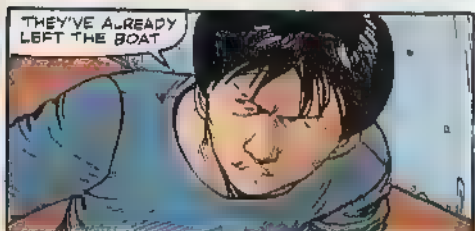
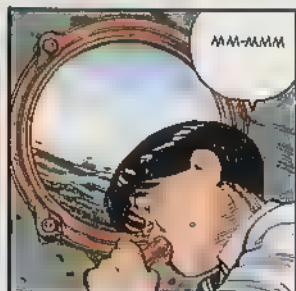
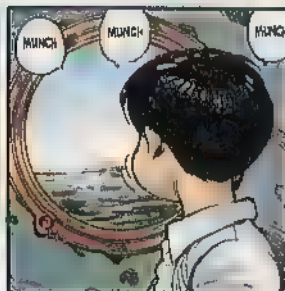




T PAYS TO BE CAREFUL. OTHERWISE WE COULD END UP DEAD.



Y'KNOW, IT'S REALLY GOOD.



WHAT
ARE
YOU--?

OH!!

KEEP
BACK

IT'S FOR A
GREAT
CAUSE.

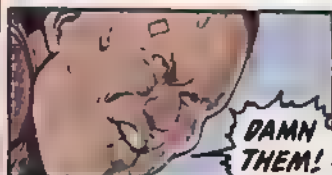
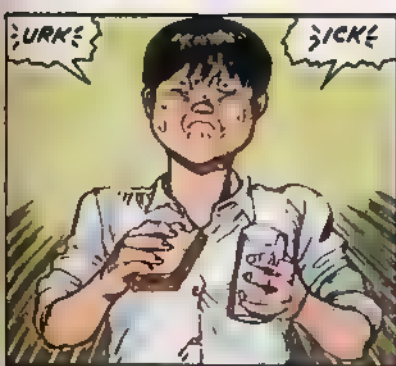
MR NEZU
DOESN'T BELIEVE
IN NEGLECTING
EVEN THE
SMALLEST
DETAILS.

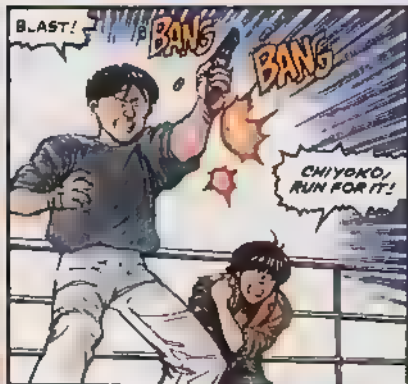
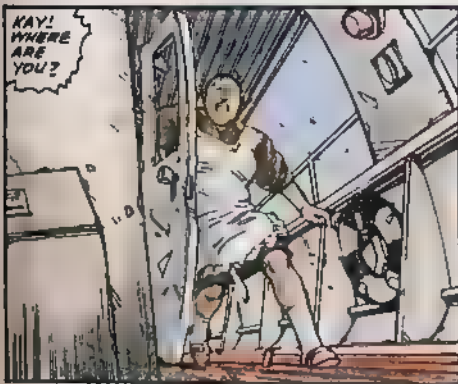
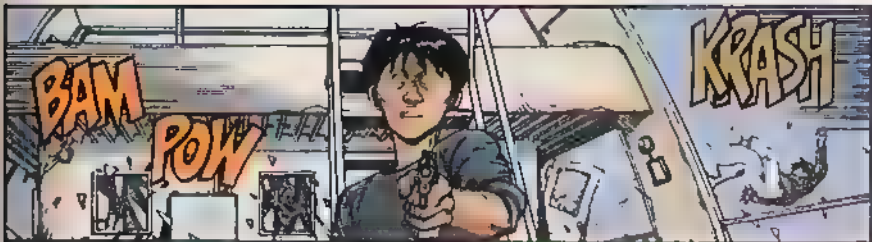
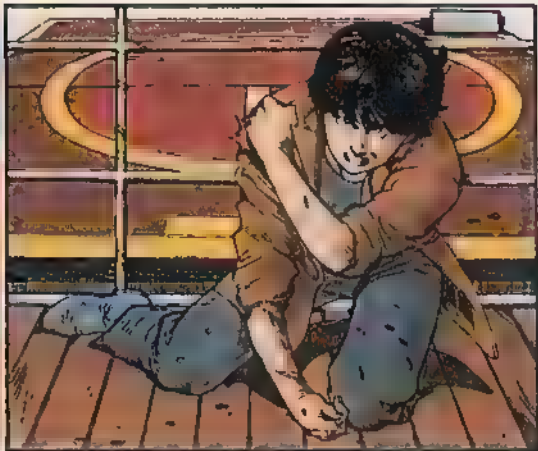
NEZU...!!

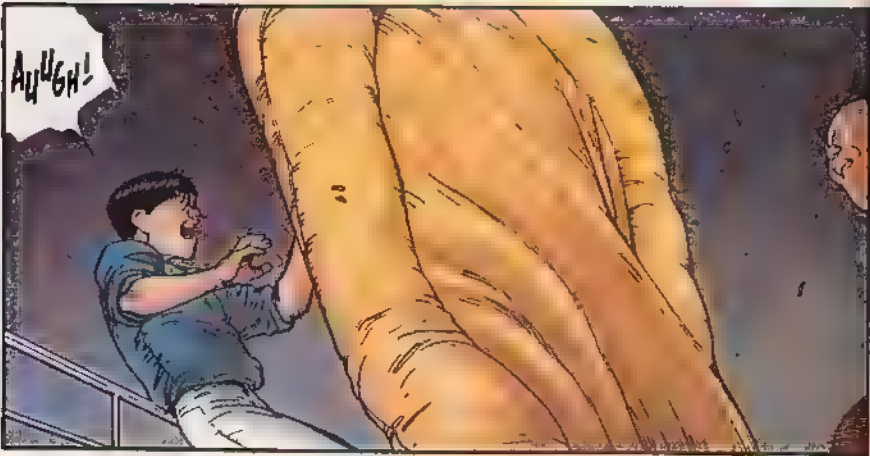
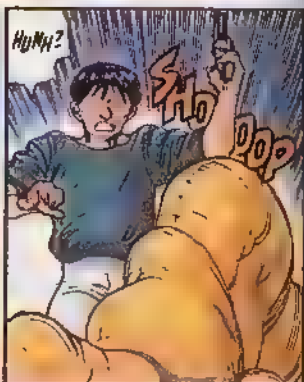
YOU'LL BE
JOINING YOUR
FRIENDS NOW.

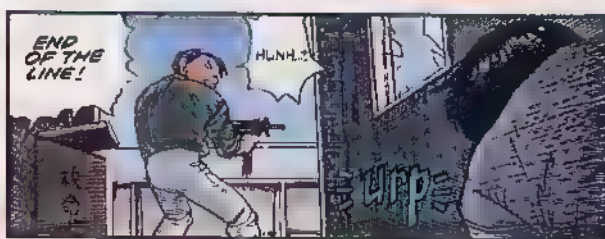
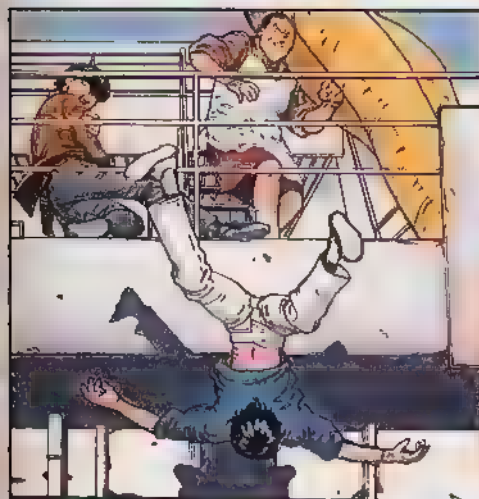
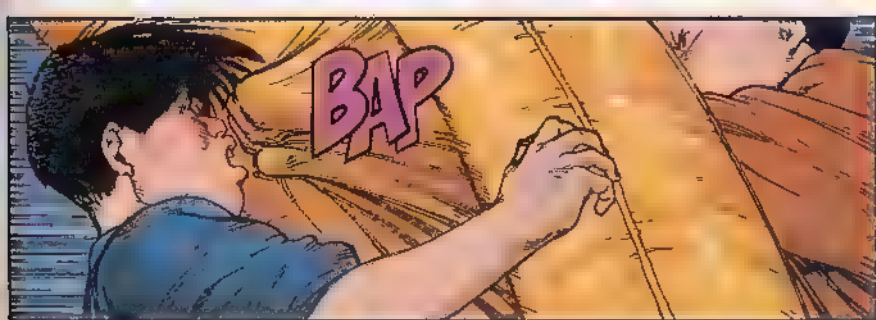
BANG

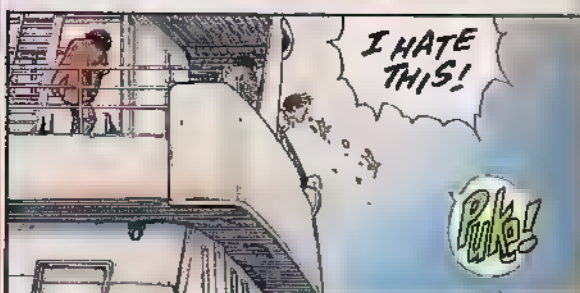
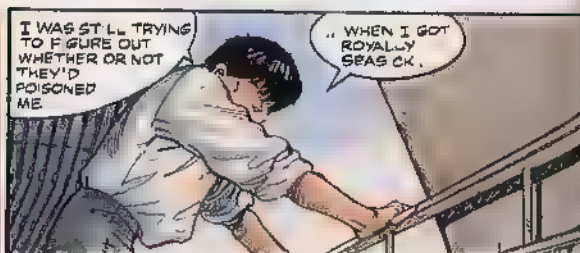
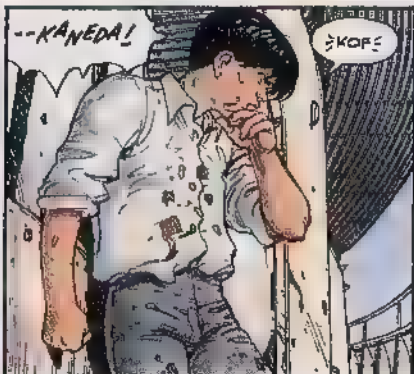
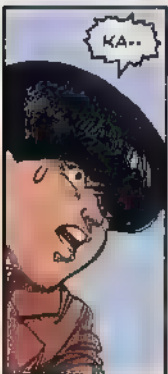
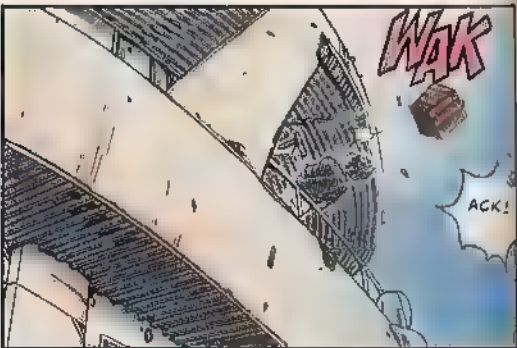
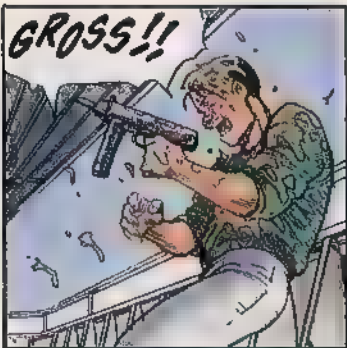
HE
BETRAYED
US!

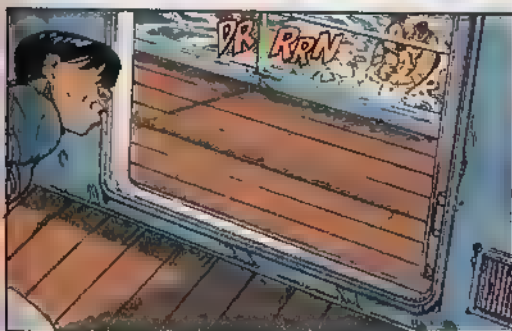
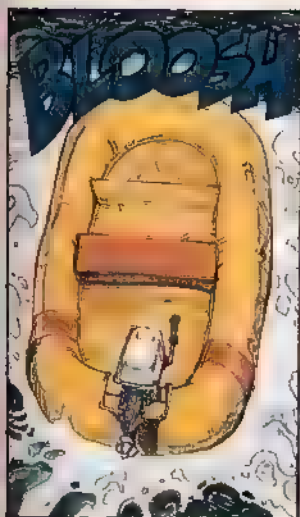
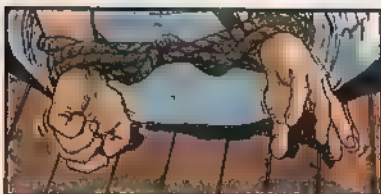
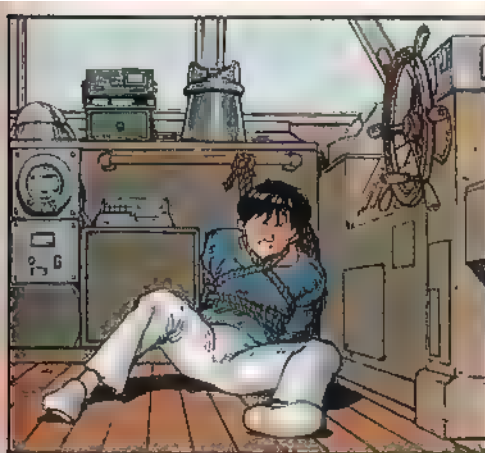


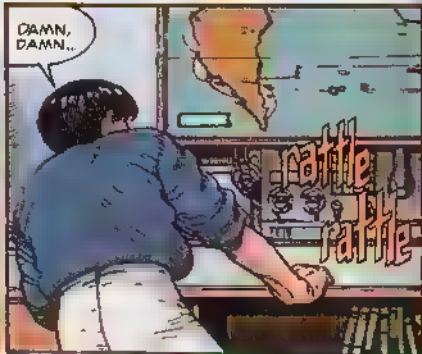
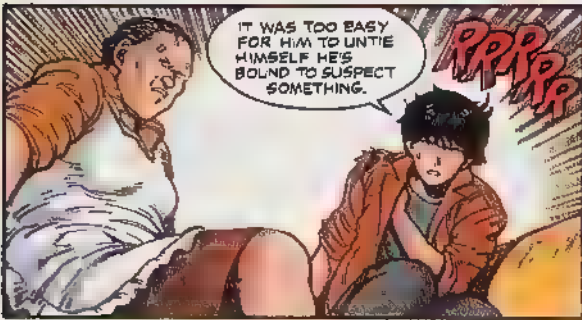
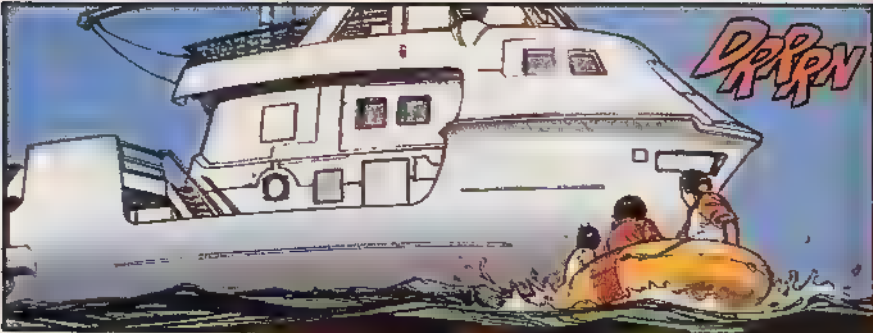


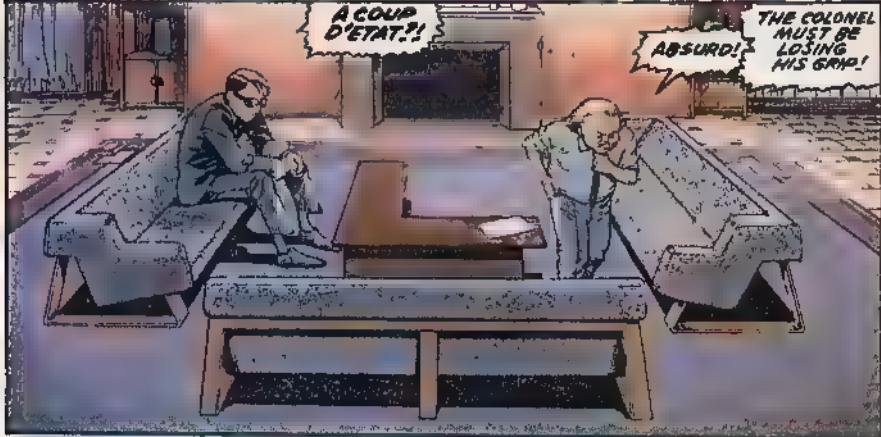












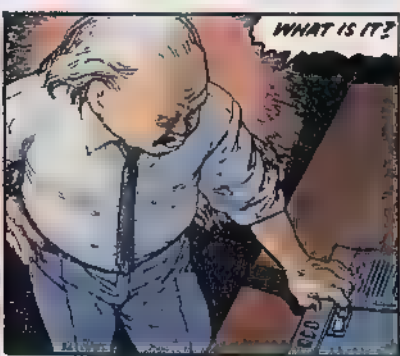
A COUP
D'ETAT?!

ABSRD!

THE COLONEL
MUST BE
LOSING
HIS GRIP!



beeeep



WHAT IS IT?



SEA MOUSE IS
CALLING IN, SIR
SAYS HE HAS AN
IMPORTANT
MESSAGE.



LATER!

YES,
SIR



PLEASE GIVE ME
YOUR MESSAGE,
SEA MOUSE, I'LL
RELAY IT.



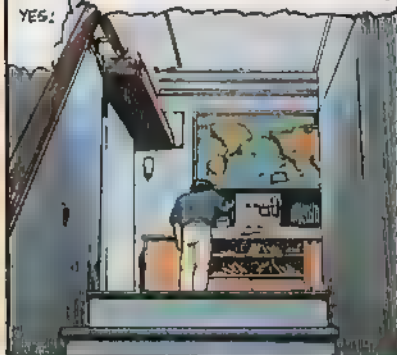
THIS IS...
HARD TO ADMIT...
BUT...
ABOUT THOSE THREE
PEOPLE...

YOU LET THEM GET AWAY?!?



I'M SORRY! I PROMISE TO MAKE IT UP TO YOU!

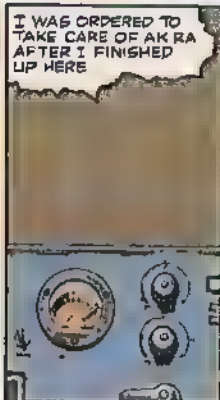
YES!



YOU MORON! HOW COULD YOU LET A WOMAN AND TWO KIDS GET THE BETTER OF YOU?



I WAS ORDERED TO TAKE CARE OF AKIRA AFTER I FINISHED UP HERE



WHERE IS HE NOW?

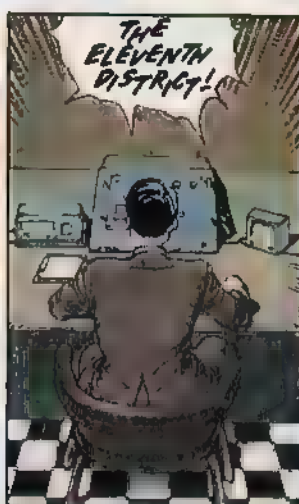
NINCOMPOOP!



HE'S AT MR. NEZU'S HOME!



THE ELEVENTH DISTRICT!



...?...



UM... IN THE 48TH DISTRICT?





SAY, WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOUR VOICE?



NOTHING! I CAUGHT A COLD!

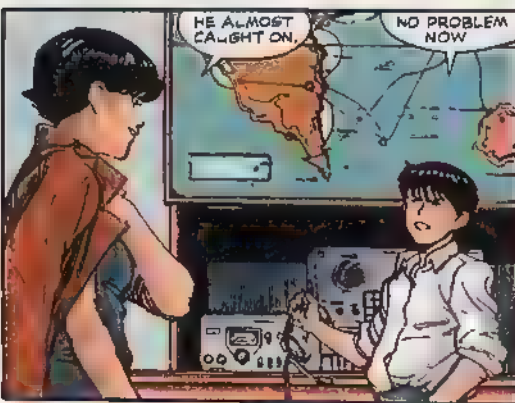
KOFF KOFF



GOTTA GO! NICE TALKIN' TO YOU! OVER!

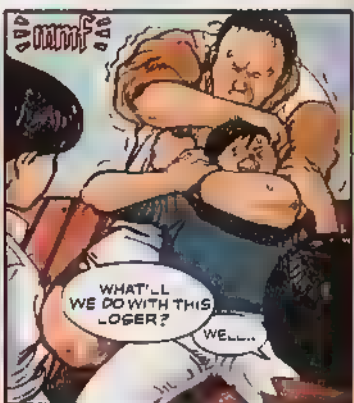
HEY! WHO'M I TALKING TO?

BIP
KLIK



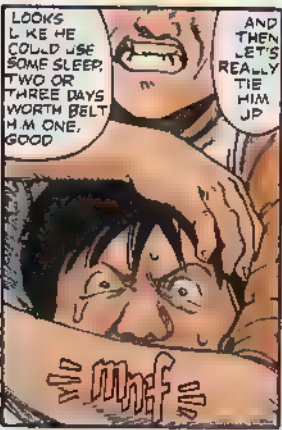
HE ALMOST CAUGHT ON.

NO PROBLEM NOW



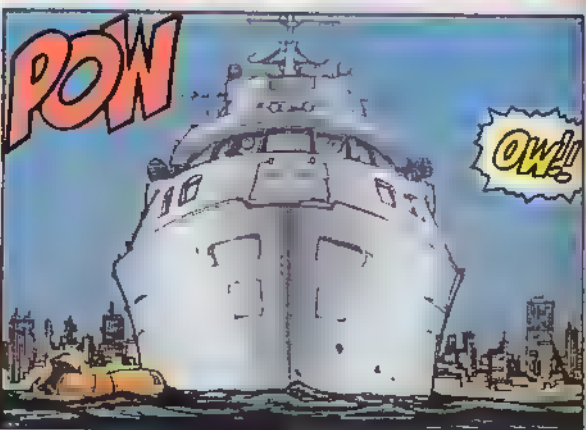
WHAT'LL WE DO WITH THIS LOGER?

WELL...



LOOKS LIKE HE COULD USE SOME SLEEP. TWO OR THREE DAYS WORTH BELT H.M ONE. GOOD

AND THEN LET'S REALLY TIE HIM UP



POW

OW!!

IF YOU WANT
SOMETHING
DONE RIGHT

**TAK
TAK**

AT A
TIME
LIKE
THIS

YOU HAVE
TO GO -
YOURSELF

SEND
MY CAR
AROUND!

NOW!



RYU!



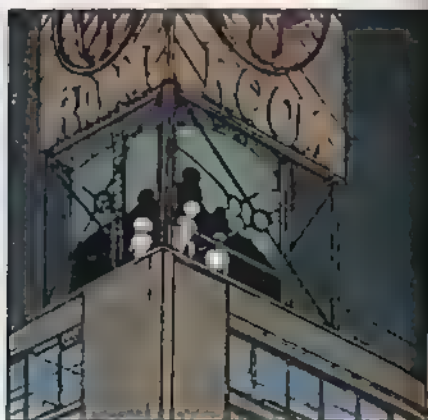
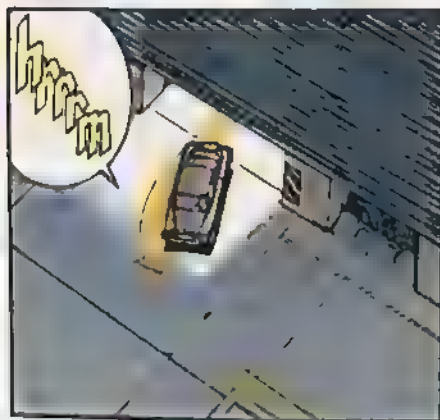
I "THOUGHT" KAY MUST
HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH
W/TH YOU BY NOW
SHE'S W/TH A WOMAN
NAMED CHIVORO

HAVE YOU
HEARD FROM
HER YET?

NO, I HAVEN'T!
I'M VERY BUSY!

BUT MY
SOURCES SAY
CHIVORO HAS
TRYING TO
REACH YOU

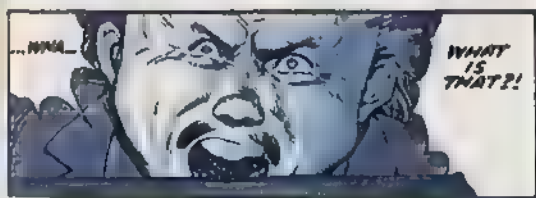
SWOOSH





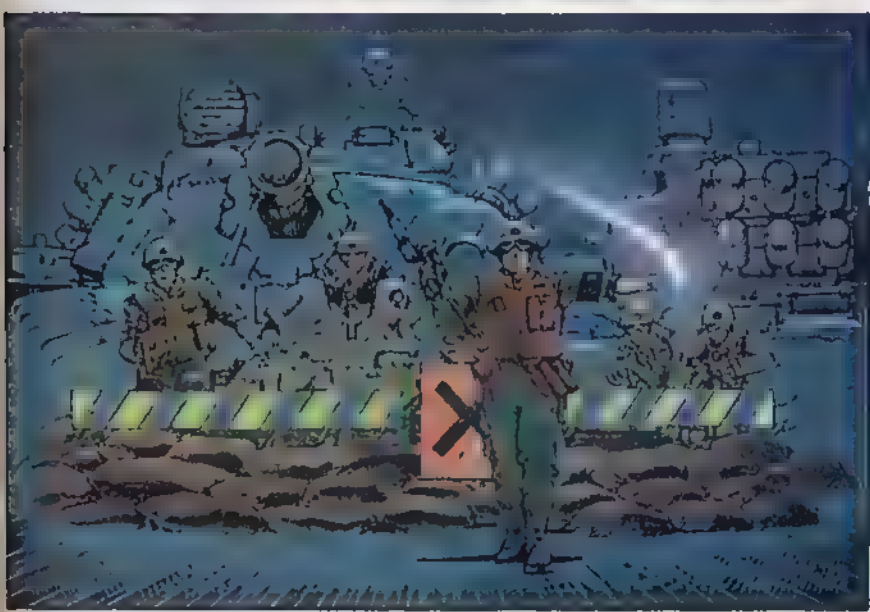
ROAD-BLOCK, SIR.

WHY WOULD THERE BE A

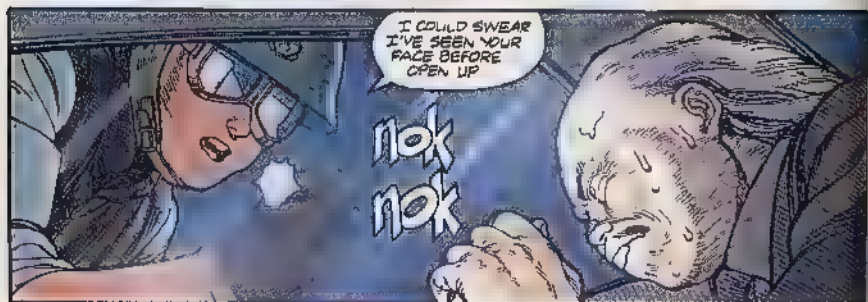
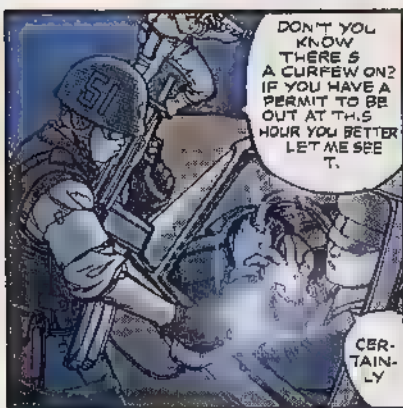
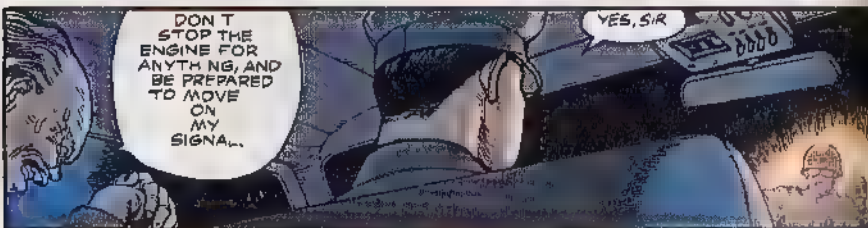
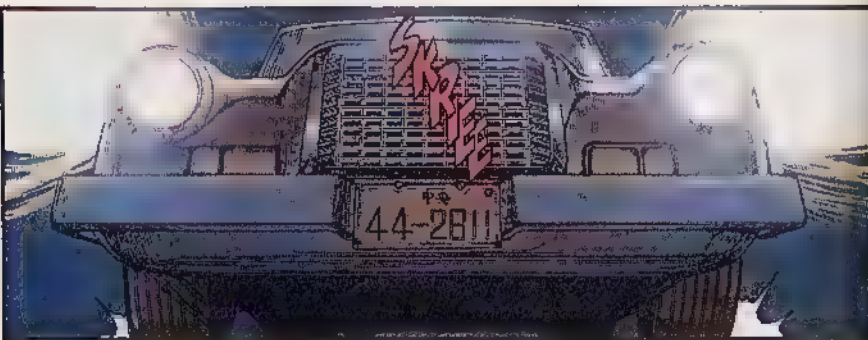


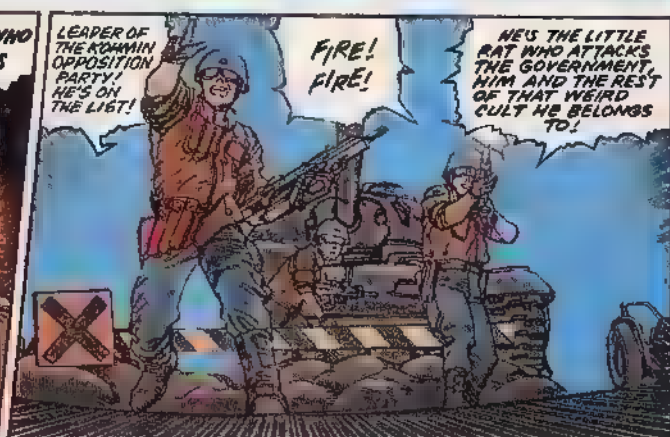
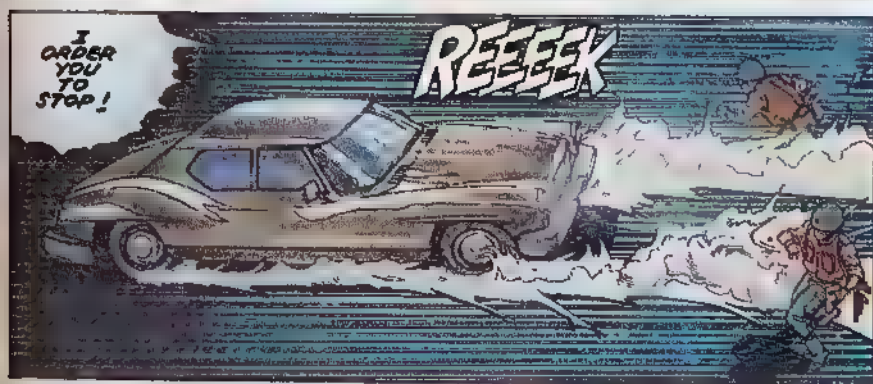
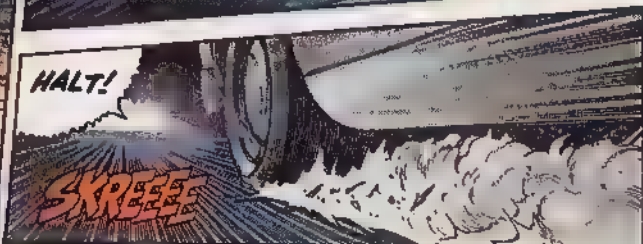
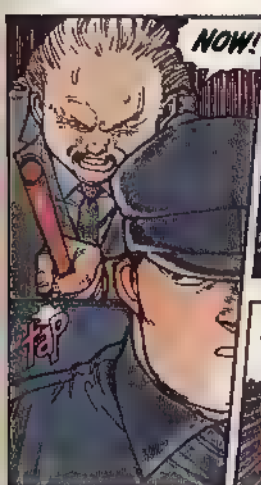
...HMM...

WHAT IS THAT?!



WHAT IS THAT?!





THE MAKING OF AKIRA

THE EPIC COMIC

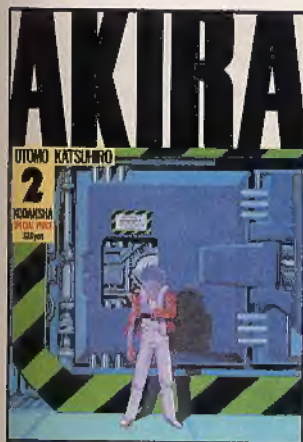
PART I

The publishing of Katsuhiro Otomo's **Akira** in the United States requires much more time and effort than a standard comic book reprint. Before American audiences see the final product, it has gone through a complex "Westernization" procedure.

In Japan, **Akira** is first serialized in 20 page black-and-white installments in Kodansha Ltd.'s **Young Magazine**. **Young Magazine** is a 300-page weekly aimed at high school and college students.

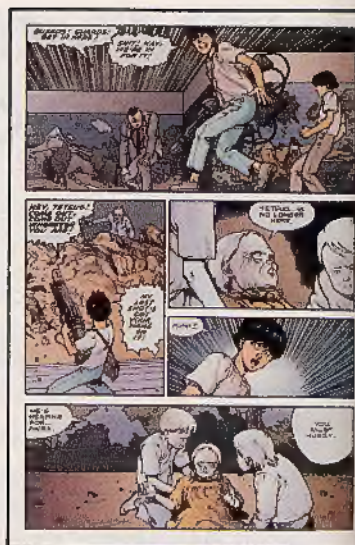


An Issue of Kodansha Ltd.'s **Young Magazine** from December, 1986.



The second of five Japanese volumes of **Akira**.

The serialized installments are collected into volumes of 300 to 400 pages each. A fifth and final volume is forthcoming, bringing the total number of pages in **Akira** up to 1800. The sales of these volumes in Japan have been phenomenal—the completed **Akira** saga will have a total of three and a half million copies in print.



An original page from Kodansha's *Akira* (left); a colored page from the Epic version (right).

Archie Goodwin, former Editor-in-Chief of Epic Comics, together with the staff of Kodansha, divided the volumes into 64 page sections for publication. Kodansha then provided "clean proofs" of the artwork.

Japanese comics are designed for lettering that reads vertically. Before sending the artwork to Epic, Mash•Room Co., Ltd., Otomo's own studio, removes all Japanese lettering, sound effects, and dialogue balloons.

The artwork is reversed through a camera process, so that *Akira* will reproduce from left to right. New artwork replaces the dialogue and sound effect balloons, and eventually new balloons will be drawn to hold horizontal lettering. The clean "mirror" proofs are then sent to Epic, along with the script translation.

Next month we will examine the translation, adaptation, and scripting process.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

writer/illustrator

YASUMITSU SUETAKE

chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

MAKOTO SHIOSAKI

SATOSHI TAKABATAKE

assistants to Mr. Otomo

HIROSHI HIRATA

designer • AKIRA calligraphy

AKIRA SAITO

designer • Kodansha edition

Kodansha Ltd

YOKO UMEZAWA

with **LINDA M. YORK**

translation

KOICHI YURI

editor • Kodansha edition

YUKA ANDO

editorial coordinator • Tokyo

NORIYUKI OKAZAKI

managing editor • New York

Epic Comics

JO DUFFY

english adaptation

STEVE OLIFF

with

GLORIA VASQUEZ

colorists

MICHAEL HIGGINS

letterer

HARRY CANDELARIO • STEVE ALEXANDROV

production

MARIE JAVINS

assistant editor

MARGARET CLARK

editor

CARL POTTS

executive editor

There is a shrill sound that fills the air and beats against the soul. It is the sound of panic that grips the terrified citizens of Neo-Tokyo. It is the sound of the caretaker robots who carry out their orders to "protect" regardless of who they destroy. It is the sound of gunfire that rattles against the asphalt as the struggle for who will control Akira rages. It is the sound of double speak shrieking against all logic as a government scrambles for high ground. It is sound and fury all for nothing against the power of Akira.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA

